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House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. RAHALL).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
October 26, 2009.

I hereby appoint the Honorable NICK J. RAHALL II to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 6, 2009, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 30 minutes and each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes.

H.R. 3202, THE WATER PROTECTION AND REINVESTMENT ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The United States is facing a challenge today in terms of fraying infrastructure from coast to coast. The need to rebuild and renew America has never been more critical; not only to strengthen our economy, to protect our health, to reduce global warming, it's important for our national and international competitiveness.

Mr. Speaker, nowhere is this more important than dealing with long-neglected water infrastructure, because as bad as things are on the surface with problems with our electrical grid, crumbling roads and bridges in poor repair, what is under the surface is an even worse condition. We have 72,000 miles of sewer pipe and water main that are over 80 years of age. Every year there are almost a quarter million water main breaks which cause everything from traffic jams to supply disruptions. Who can forget a few months ago when a main broke on River Road here in metropolitan Washington and they had to send in a helicopter to rescue a stranded motorist?

Water infrastructure problems result in 1.3 million cases of waterborne disease each year, while sewer overflows during rainstorms send raw sewage into our oceans, our bays and our rivers, resulting in an estimated 1.8 to 3.5 million illnesses. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that there is a \$534 billion gap between our current water investment and the projected needs over the next 20 years, just for water and wastewater.

To deal with that, Mr. Speaker, I have introduced the Water Protection and Reinvestment Act, H.R. 3202. At a time of economic problems for our country, this bill will create between 200,000 and 267,000 new jobs in engineering, construction and related industries. The bill is deficit neutral, attaching small fees to those activities and industries that benefit from clean water or who complicate our need to purify water. It will raise \$10 billion in a deficit neutral way.

Because of the need and because of the focused solution of this legislation, H.R. 3202 is supported by a broad cross-section of stakeholders. There are already 19 bipartisan Members of Congress who have signed on, but we have the Associated General Contractors, the American Society of Civil Engi-

neers, the International Union of Operating Engineers, the National Utility Contractors Association as just some in the private sector. We have water utilities and government officials, from the National Association of Clean Water Agencies, the American Public Works Association, the Association of Floodplain Managers. And we have public interest groups, like American Rivers, the Rural Community Assistance Partnership, the Clean Water Network and the Alliance for Water Efficiency.

Mr. Speaker, by providing this funding through existing State revolving funds, money will be equitably distributed to all States. We have special provisions to ensure that small rural communities and large urban areas get funding specific to their needs. We can't afford to leave anyone or any community out.

I strongly urge my colleagues to reflect on what we have here in our community in Washington, D.C., and back home in our own districts. Too many of these systems rely on brick and water sewers that date back decades; in some cases centuries. The economy cannot stand it, the health of our communities cannot put up with this neglect, and frankly the pressure on local taxpayers and ratepayers is such that they need and deserve our help.

I strongly urge that my colleagues who haven't yet examined this legislation do so, and that they join the bipartisan support for H.R. 3202, the Water Protection and Reinvestment Act.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 37 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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